

Rev. Ruth McCarty

Rev. Ruth McCarty's church experience began when she was a child attending a conservative, mission-minded Baptist church in Flint, Michigan. While in college, as a group Bible study leader with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, she accepted a call to missionary service that took her to Cuba and Haiti. She came back from the experience changed. "Although I continued to work in the teaching profession, I continued to be moved by the spiritual experience, realizing that in the words of Peggy Lee, 'There was more to life than this,'" she says. In 1963, she was commissioned as a missionary to Singapore and Indonesia. "I was sponsored by the East Java Synod of the Indonesian Christian Church to design and provide leadership training workshops for teachers of Christian education. I credit this experience with broadening my faith perspective," she says.

Rev. McCarty received her Master of Divinity degree at Western Theological Seminary and was ordained in the Reformed Church in America (RCA) in 1982. "I was called by the Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ in Douglas, Michigan as their pastor, holding dual standing in the RCA and UCC," she says. "When I was called by the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ to be the Director of the Conference's Spiritual Renewal Center in Bristol, I dropped my standing in the RCA."

When the Conference closed the Center in 1996, Rev. McCarty took an early retirement and returned to Michigan, where she served as a hospital chaplain, developed the Department of Pastoral Care and was Chaplain at the UCC-related Pilgrim Manor Retirement Community, served as part-time Minister of Pastoral Care at First Congregational United Church of Christ in Grand Rapids, and served as Interim Minister at Newaygo Congregational United Church of Christ.

The ministerial assistance Rev. McCarty receives in the form of health premium supplementation "enabled me to pay my health insurance premium [and] reinforces the strong sense that the UCC is concerned for my best welfare. I am abundantly blessed by the ways that God has led me," she says, adding, "There are no limits to the grace of God, who will make sure you will always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works." (2 Corinthians 9:8, The Inclusive Bible)

HOW THE FUNDS ARE USED

The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide some form of assistance to impact the lives of hundreds of persons during the past year.

- **MONTHLY PENSION SUPPLEMENTATION** for 408 lower-income retired UCC clergy/lay employees.

Our retired clergy/lay employees relied on this income supplementation for basic needs such as food, utilities, and living and medical expenses. Since needs exceed the amount received through the Christmas Fund Offering, assistance was also supported by Our Church's Wider Mission and legacy gifts to Ministerial Assistance. The amount of pension supplementation totaled \$1,342,000 in 2013.
- **QUARTERLY HEALTH PREMIUM SUPPLEMENTATION** for 239 lower-income retired UCC clergy/lay employees.

These funds subsidized premiums for the UCC Medicare Supplement Plan with Rx so that individuals could afford and receive quality health care. Assistance totaled \$508,000 in 2013.
- **CHRISTMAS "THANK YOU" GIFT CHECKS** given to 543 retired UCC clergy/lay church employees.

This special gift at Christmas time reminds these Veterans of the Cross that they have not been forgotten and that the Church is grateful for their service. Gifts totaled \$235,800 in 2013.
- **EMERGENCY GRANTS** for 65 active or retired UCC clergy/lay employees.

Sometimes those who serve the Church need our help, and emergency funds are available to assist in covering costs that arise unexpectedly – for example, large medical expenses, or home damage resulting from natural disasters. Emergency assistance totaled \$57,000 in 2013.

ADVENT I – HOPE

